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AN
IMPARTIAL STATEMENT
OF THE
MERITS AND SERVICES
OF
OPPOSITION;

WITH A VIEW TO THE
Preservation of the BRITISH CONSTITUTION,
AND THE
Means of restoring PEACE and PROSPERITY
to these Countries.

ADDRESSED TO THE PEOPLE OF GREAT BRITAIN.

BY S. FLEMING. *K*

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AN

IMPARTIAL STATEMENT,

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ADDRESSED TO THE PEOPLE OF GREAT BRITAIN.

THE alarming situation to which the affairs of the country are reduced, is too evident to require any proof. It is unnecessary to offer any observations on what every one must feel, and what comes home to the breast of the humblest individual. Whether these disastrous calamities, which overwhelm our minds with dismay, and almost benumb our faculties, might have been avoided, by proper foresight, or by following the advice of the virtuous and enlightened among ourselves, is a question, on which no doubt can be entertained at present, except by the bigotted and corrupt supporters of ministers. It is, indeed, a melancholy reflection, that, for want of attending to the calm suggestions of reason, instead of the furious sallies of passion and prejudice, we have been hurried

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into the most awful and most perplexing crisis that has ever presented itself in our history.

All this has, as far as you were concerned in the transactions, been effected with the best intentions in the world on your part. With the most generous and praise-worthy sentiments of loyalty and honour predominating in your hearts, your deluders have converted even your virtues to your ruin : they had resolved to make yourselves accessaries to your own destruction : they had naturally hoped, that the shame of acknowledging the delusion, which had been so successfully practiced on you, would operate to induce you to follow them in their mad and ruinous career. Their artifices have been attended with a success, which, in a few years, will startle credibility, and will be remembered only for the wide and extensive ruin that has been the effect of such mischievous policy.

In these preliminary observations you will readily perceive, that I allude to the circumstances which immediately preceded the commencement of this unhappy contest. You all remember the alarms that were so industriously spread, the rumours of conspiracies and insurrections, the assembling of the troops round the metropolis, the fortifications of the Tower, and the whole train of circumstances that bewildered

wildered the understandings and imaginations of all descriptions of people. Immediately followed the Proclamation for assembling the Parliament, and embodying the militia, which continued still more to diffuse the panic through the nation. In such a situation, rage and fear banished all moderation from the minds of men: the reports that numbers in the country had conspired with the Jacobins in France, to overthrow our constitution, and introduce anarchy and bloodshed, palsied every effort of the wise and enlightened to dispel the illusion; the friends of liberty and reform were suddenly silenced, and no barrier was left to oppose the headstrong and violent passions of the multitude.

The debates in Parliament served still farther to inflame the public mind; and the execution of the unfortunate Louis roused the sympathy of the people, and impelled them to the most violent execration of the perpetrators of that deed, and the French nation in general. Under these impressions, a declaration of war was forced from the executive council of France, which was provoked and instigated by numberless vexatious circumstances, the insults offered to their ambassador, and the desperate invectives thrown out against them by some intemperate politicians in Parliament.

It was on this occasion, when all was dismay

and confusion, when the noisy partizans of democracy were reduced to insignificance and silence, that the firm body of the Whigs, headed by their immortal leader, stood forth to rescue the nation from madness and ruin; to restore the confidence of the public; to support the freedom of the press, and the unrestrained intercourse of sentiments and opinions. They laboured to avert the wide-spreading evils; they deprecated the destructive consequences of the war; they pointed out the ruin and misery that must attend the precipitate policy of our rulers; they employed their unremitting exertions in Parliament, and out of Parliament, to preserve the blessings of peace; they warned the people of the inevitable consequences of a blind and servile submission to ministers; they disclaimed against the crooked policy of alarm, which alone, to a reflecting mind, will appear to be the prevailing cause of the present miseries. Unsupported by popular favour, their constancy, their dignity, and their temper were exposed to a severe trial; but they triumphed over every meaner passion, and proceeded undaunted in their laudable labours, which they continued with a perseverance unparallelled before. Through the violent passions and prejudices of the moment, they were defeated in their attempts; and their opposers must now lament,

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in common with the nation, the wretched blindness and obstinacy of their own conduct.

I have deemed it necessary, on this occasion, to recal to your attention the delusive policy that gave birth to the present war; because, without well weighing the original circumstances, and the various artifices so successfully played off by the ruling faction, at the commencement of this contest, we can have no just idea of the nature of the war; nor can we, at present, discuss with sufficient accuracy the important question of peace.

A review of these circumstances will prove incontestibly, to persons of any penetration, that the real object of a war, promoted, and set on foot under such suspicious circumstances, and with such gross and palpable fraud and delusion, could not be justified on the grounds of national interest; and must have had, therefore, some concealed and malignant tendency, which our rulers encouraged, but judged it rash and imprudent to disclose.

At present, indeed, we are too much alarmed to investigate with calmness the motives of their conduct. Whatever might have been their designs, or rather, whatever might have been the inviting combination of various objects, which they might flatter themselves with promoting, this is certain, that in the management

ment, the operation, and the total conduct of the war, they have failed most egregiously, and have been completely baffled in all their attempts. At home their policy has been attended with the most dismal effects: the ruin of our liberties, the destruction of the social intercourse of Englishmen, the free communication of opinions and sentiments on public questions, which formed the vital spring and energy of the state; these have been the only conquests they have achieved. The utter extirpation of all that was valuable in our country and constitution has completed the triumphs of their sinister ambition.

To finish the work of ruin, to add to the *acme* of iniquity, we are threatened with the final destruction of public and private credit; we tremble at the idea of an invasion by a desperate enemy, through the *impotent* policy of our infatuated governors. By a complication of calamities, we are reduced to a situation in which it requires more wisdom, than usually falls to the lot of mankind, to extricate us from our distresses.

If indeed we attend to the composition of the ministerial body, and consider the talents and dispositions of the authors, and advisers of the present war, we shall not be surprized at the natural effects of a mischievous and short-sighted

fought policy. The cabinet is for the most part composed of men of crafty souls, and narrow understandings; men destitute of that elevation and comprehension of mind, so essential to the ministers of a great country, and so peculiarly requisite in the present critical and perplexing situation of human affairs. They, who have been the fittest instruments of corruption, and the dextrous managers of petty debates and intrigues, are unqualified by the nature of things, for transactions which require magnanimity, genius, and an undaunted spirit. Such are not the qualities of the men in power of the present period among us. Perhaps the misfortunes of our allies may reasonably be attributed to the predominating influence of men of a like description in their councils. From a concurrence of similar effects we may infer a similarity in the producing causes. Those who are well acquainted with the characters of those ministers who have directed the operations of the grand confederacy against France, may pursue this idea with a probability of drawing the same conclusion.

Superficial observers are too apt to consider the course of human affairs, as influenced by an irresistible fatality, and receiving little or no attention or direction from the persons possessing authority, and presiding in the management of
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the affairs of states and empires. The astonishing revolutions that have occurred within a very short period, may have led many to adopt this sentiment, strengthened as it is, by the most extraordinary events that confound speculation, and seem to leave us without a clue in these mysterious operations. But, upon a closer examination, we shall find, that these miraculous changes have been effected by the active and energetic talents of the popular leaders on the one side, seconded and favoured by the strange debility, ignorance and obstinacy of the rulers on the other. It is to their incapacity we must attribute the wonderful successes of their antagonists. Extraordinary as it may appear, they have proved the best allies and friends of the cause which they opposed with their united exertions. Not supposing them destitute of zeal on a question which so nearly affects their interests, and perhaps their existence, we must be surprised at that blindness and obstinacy which hurry men into measures that terminate in their own ruin without considerably annoying the common enemy.

The object of the present Publication, my fellow-citizens, is to apply these principles to the actual state of affairs among ourselves: it is indispensibly necessary for us to exert our own faculties, and to listen to the advice of impartial counsellors. We have been taught severe lessons
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by adversity, and by blindly yielding to the caprice and prejudices of ignorant and wicked men. We must endeavour to enter on a new path, and seek our preservation in our own activity. At present, indeed, there seems a general desire and concurrence among you, to drive from their usurped stations, the evil counsellors who promoted the present unhappy contest, and who have brought on the long train of public calamities, the inevitable consequence of this ill-fated war. Though their expulsion must be a most desirable object, yet, unless a proper choice is made in selecting their successors, it will only tend to fix and perpetuate the evils under which we groan. If raw and unexperienced tyros are, by the concealed influence of a lurking faction, forced into the highest stations, what must we expect but the usual effects of a rash and precipitate policy? The benefits of experience will be utterly lost to us, and we must dread a repetition of the evils which overwhelm us. Let us, above all things, beware of the secret advisers, the dark cabal, which is supposed to have been at the bottom of the deleterious policy, and all the ruinous schemes that have disgraced the present reign. From their influence we have every thing to dread.

The only efficacious remedy at the present period, for our distresses, is to have at the head

of affairs those men, who are by nature, by habit, by every meritorious service, and by every tie that can consolidate the confidence of their countrymen, the true protectors of the rights of the people, and the real friends and supporters of our constitution on the principles and in the spirit in which it ought to exist. It is by this standard we must judge who are the persons competent to the task of extricating us from our difficulties, and restoring the nation to it's due rank and importance from the state of insignificance into which it has dwindled into in the hands of a weak and wicked administration. It is needless for me to point out to your observation where these men are to be found: their merits are not buried in obscurity; they have been always foremost, and in the most conspicuous station, actively employed in defending our liberties, in enlarging the sphere of our rights and privileges, and resisting the dreadful encroachments of uncontrolled and arbitrary authority: even while unsupported by popular applause they never relaxed their vigilant efforts, but proceeded undisturbed in their generous and glorious career, to save us from the ruin and misery produced by our own delusion. The consciousness of their own rectitude sustained them in this trying and perplexing situation: the purity of their motives and their actions could be only equalled
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by their transcendent talents. Exposed on the one hand to the mortifying insults of unmerited power, and on the other to the fury and prejudices of popular bigotry, they never shrunk from the station which their own choice, and their own magnanimity imposed upon them: they disdained all alliance with fraud and power; they made no virtues of necessity, but found their judgment and their honour implicated in the part they had taken on themselves to act: they had no allurements of petty ambition to engage them in their duty; no personal views, or resentments to gratify. The happiness of the country, the preservation of its liberties, nay, the interests of the whole human race, were the objects which engaged their attention, and in the pursuit of these they lost sight of all meaner considerations. Amidst the black and bloody scenes which continue to be acted on the theatre of the world, amidst the general depravation which the human character seems degraded to at the present period, amidst the most extensive and all-devouring corruption, they displayed the purest virtue, the sincerest patriotism, the tenderest humanity, the most exalted and unimpeached integrity. While the leaders of the great parties that divided Europe fought their objects by means the most execrable and flagitious; while sanguinary demagogues and unfeeling despots

let loose their exterminating rage upon the victims of their vengeance; while cruelty and persecution seemed to fill up the measure of human misery, they alone stood forth to mediate between the madness of contending factions, to reconcile their interests, to restore the peace and happiness of the world. By a sad fatality, by an irreparable calamity to the human race, their advice was not attended to, their mediation was rejected with scorn by the insolence of power, and was received with coolness by the people through the melancholy delusion of the public mind. The consequences are afflicting in the extreme. A war of unexampled fury has raged for several years through the finest parts of Europe, attended with the most enormous bloodshed, atrocity, and desolation destructive to the liberty, the property, the happiness, and the morality of mankind. The balance of power is irrecoverably lost, all Europe is cast at the feet of the proud Republic, and we must think ourselves happy, if we can escape from its overwhelming force. Our resources seem to vanish from us, all the nerves and sinews of the states are most miserably debilitated, discontent and chagrin pervade universally these dominions. In short, ruin seems to advance with hasty strides through the horrid gloom in which we are involved.

It must be the height of madness to suppose,
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that the men whose incapacity has been the prevailing cause of these calamities can in any sense be competent to restore the affairs of the nation to a tolerable degree of stability or prosperity. *They* have proved themselves able and expert in ruin and oppression only. *They* who have plunged us into a disastrous and unnecessary war are not qualified to restore to us the blessings of peace. *They* cannot repair and reform our constitution who have undermined that venerable fabrick. *They* must not be called to fill up the enormous breaches themselves have made in the strong-holds and bulwarks of our liberties. *They*, whose profligate extravagance has squandered our revenues and resources, and shaken the pillars of public and private credit, are certainly not the fittest persons in the world to retrieve our finances, to restore our credit, and to raise the value of the public securities. Other hands, other minds must be called to this glorious and arduous task. Who then, it will naturally be asked, are the men the best qualified for these important objects? Who are the persons destined for our deliverance? I answer those only, whose constant labour it was to avert these calamities, whose uniform exertions were employed to protect us from the evils which pour in upon us without number; who incessantly deprecated the disastrous events of this unhappy warfare; who, *alone*
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and *unsupported*, resisted the destructive policy of our rulers; who *alone* ventured to check them in their villanous and desperate schemes. They it was, who laboured to procure that salutary reform in our constitution, which would have saved the nation and all Europe from the numberless woes that have burst upon them. If their counsels had been attended to, England at the present moment, instead of lying down unnerved and dispirited before the haughty foe, would have been the arbitress, the guardian of the peace and prosperity of the world. Our commerce would have flourished beyond former calculation, our credit would have been erected on the firmest basis, our *constitution* improved, and enthroned in the affections of the people. Whether these blessings be attainable after the unfortunate obstinacy of our ministers, is a subject on which I shall not touch at present.

I pause at the magnitude and perilous uncertainty of the question. I shall not add to your despondency by any further observations on this matter. You have had, I must confess, full room and scope for melancholy reflections and anticipations: The gloom of the national character has had full and frequent opportunities for improvement. The present crisis is better calculated for that purpose, than any former one within our memory.

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What I have said in praise of the conduct of the Opposition, and of the great Whig party in our country, comes very short of the admiration I feel for their talents and their virtues. All history cannot afford an instance of any body of men having acted, in any crisis, with such wisdom and moderation, with such unshaken honour, fidelity and patriotism: as at no former period has occurred a situation of human affairs so awful, so trying, so perplexing, so pregnant with wonderful events, and unheard-of calamities; so at no other period has been found such a combination of wisdom and fortitude, so mighty a mass of genius to grasp and struggle with the exigencies of the times. And shall we be blind and insensible to so much merit? Shall we ignorantly reject the advantages of an union with such characters? Shall Britons, who have always prided themselves, and with reason, on their candour, their justice and generosity, and above all, by their grateful sense of eminent public services? Shall Britons, I say, repay with scorn and indifference their ablest and warmest friends and protectors? I trust it must be entirely owing to delusion, if contrary sentiments do not prevail. Otherwise, this would betray a symptom of the most alarming nature. To me, the destruction of our credit, the ruin of our commerce and manufactures, nay the advance of a hostile army into the

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the heart of the country, would not appear half so dreadful, as this coldness and indifference to all that is truly great and valuable among ourselves. This is, indeed, the most terrible of revolutions: because trade, commerce, and manufactures are but mere creatures, which the breath of power can easily revive and supply; because public credit has been known to survive the severest shocks; because victories are the sure attendants on numbers and courage; because all these advantages may be acquired, and often follow the most distressful situation of affairs. But when once a nation loses all sense of gratitude for meritorious services, all admiration of superior virtue and abilities, and all confidence in the honour and integrity of distinguished patriots, then it may be said, that the *mind of a country is slain*; then are lost all the energies inspired by a love of glory and distinction, then will a whole people sink into one stupid and senseless mass; unworthy of liberty, unworthy of that property, to which it foolishly sacrifices the means of its preservation, equally incapable of resisting an enterprising foreign enemy, and producing nothing but ignorance, debility and incapacity at home.

I mean not however, to alarm you with such gloomy apprehensions. I do not mean to say that such a picture forms a real resemblance to the

the state of the public mind. It is foolish to exaggerate by imaginary descriptions, when the reality is in itself sufficiently afflicting. The mischievous policy of alarm so consistently pursued by our present governors, has indeed been attended with the most deleterious effects. It has stupified the nation into the most deplorable insensibility to it's real dangers; it has worn out the great springs of action, which should be called into motion only on the most critical occasions; it has wearied and harrassed the minds of men into a calm and gloomy despair. But, in the midst of this deplorable abjectness, the magnitude of the present crisis has inspired me to raise a feeble voice against this inglorious indifference and inactivity; to recal your minds to your ancient sentiments of veneration for public virtue, to the free intercourse of opinions on the most interesting topics, and to your former attachment to the principles of genuine liberty. Surely the men who alone have preserved these virtuous principles and sentiments in action; who have kept alive the disfigured traces of our admired constitution; who have unremittingly laboured to preserve the blessings of peace, without which our credit and prosperity could never be secured, have the strongest claims on your gratitude and attachment. After the most calm consideration, I may venture to

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pronounce, that nothing can preserve the constitution, or the country, but placing the affairs of the nation in the hands of those who have proved themselves the real friends of both. This conclusion I draw from a survey of the actual state of parties among ourselves; and I will place it on data which appear to me indisputable.

In the possible contingency of human affairs, it is evident, that there is no change however unexpected at present, which lies not within the bounds of probability at no very distant period. We are familiarized in our days to very extraordinary events. Reasoning with this view, let us reflect, that the party presiding at present in our country, has never confined itself to any precise and determinate political sentiments, but has wavered and shuffled in their plans and opinions on the most material objects. In one point indeed, they have been perfectly consistent; that is, in alternately deluding and alarming the people of these countries, and converting their fears and honest prejudices to their own support and emolument. Sincere in the pursuit of this object, we may look upon them as indifferent about forms, when the substance is sure to operate in their own favour. On the contrary, the democratic party has preserved the most steady and uniform consistency in their plans

plans and sentiments; and is every day gaining strength from the weakness and indiscretion of their antagonists. With such vigour in their determination, they are not likely to be stopped in their course by a reverend regard to ancient institutions. These propositions appear to me to carry demonstrative evidence with them, which nothing but the arrogance of bigotry will venture to disprove. Here then is a real danger! here is an alarming symptom to all lovers of our constitution, both in its form and spirit. In the predominance of either party, the system runs a dangerous risque of destruction.

What remedy then remains, but to throw the whole force of the state into the hands of those patriots, who, during the furious conflict of discordant factions and opinions, have preserved untainted the principles of our ancient constitution? Let the friends of order, of liberty, and of *property* weigh maturely this consideration. Their own good sense will point out to them the line of conduct to be pursued on this critical emergency. Let them calmly consider, that the advocates of despotism, and the partizans of democracy, have imbibed the most desperate antipathy against each other; that they are deadly foes, without any hopes of reconciliation or forgiveness: the sword of ven-

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geance is unsheathed between them, and the scabbard thrown away. Prudence will easily determine on that system of conduct best calculated to avert the inevitable consequences of the prevalence of either party.

Upon a review of the present state of Europe, and an examination into the characters of the persons invested with power in the different states, the most serious considerations must press upon our minds. On the one hand, the confidence of monarchs is possessed by corrupt and treacherous ministers, without genius, without elevation of mind, without an enlarged and liberal ambition; men swayed by no sentiments of honour, equally dangerous to the Prince and the people; attached to power merely for the sake of emolument, and governed by the most vulgar and short-sighted passions. They despise the people, whom they oppress and persecute, and add the bitterness of insult to the galling yoke of despotism. On the other hand, a fierce and active race of demagogues, has started into life, who have reached the summit of power by the most daring and criminal excesses. Such are the men, on whom depends the happiness of millions. Such are the arbiters of the fate of Europe. Such are the characters intrusted by the people with their most important concerns. And will not the

the humane and virtuous exclaim against such a disposal of human affairs? Will not the real lovers of mankind raise their voices against so preposterous a distribution of honours, rewards, and pre-eminence? Will they not cry out in bitterness of soul against that melancholy depravation of human nature, which invests cruelty, meanness, treachery, and apostacy, with the august robes of power and dignity; which excludes from the paths of popularity and glory all wisdom, magnanimity, genius, and humanity; and all the dignified virtues that adorn our species, and promote the interests and happiness of mankind? Hereafter none, with such an example before their eyes, will stand forth in defence of popular privileges; they will rather concur with the promoters of despotism, or further their views under the semblance of a feeble opposition. Hereditary authority will probable be exposed to the same attacks: people, as well as monarchs, are to be pitied for the same weakness, of not discerning and promoting their real friends and advocates. The only effort of wisdom required from them, that is, to select worthy and suitable objects, is the circumstance in which they so repeatedly fail: through ignorance, listlessness, and infirmity, they give themselves over to artful and insidious counsellors,

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who make a cruel use of their foibles and prejudices.

We are grievously mistaken, if we imagine that the ordinary run of men, and the common course of transactions will extricate us from this new and perplexing situation of our affairs. The slightest inspection into the history of states and empires will convince us, that, after such overpowering calamities, no people ever reached their former pitch of grandeur or prosperity, without the co-operation and presiding impulse of distinguished genius and capacity. Not to mention the fate of the great ancient empires, or the more recent instances of the sudden elevation of the French monarchy, under Henry IV, and Louis XIV, after a destructive civil war; this argument might be further illustrated by several parts of our own history. When England was sunk into insignificance in the scale of national importance; when a furious civil war was raging in the bowels of the country, it could not be imagined, that in a short time she would become the terror of the greatest potentates of Europe, and to carry her arms into the remotest quarters of the world: yet this was affected by the influence of the great characters who emerged in our civil wars, who humbled the arrogance of France and Spain, when

when those nations were governed by their haughtiest and most enterprizing monarchs and ministers. Even within our own memory, when the nation was described as having sunk into the most abject lethargy and effeminacy, the aspiring genius of Chatham triumphed over every obstacle, and commenced and completed the most glorious and brilliant career recorded in our history. Nor is it any way surprising; for the vigour and energy of elevated souls is communicated to every department of the state; the ardour of enterprize is caught from breast to breast, and the whole mass of the nation is enlivened and fermented by the electric fires of genius. It is not from avarice, it is not from corruption, that we must expect any thing great or glorious. These principles may operate in the ordinary transactions of the day, but can never embrace any grand and comprehensive scheme of action. They can move the inert and passive forms of the body politic; but other aids must be called in to communicate a more rapid and concentrated motion. The complex machinery of great states contains several minute and subtle springs, which are visible only to the piercing eye of genius; and can be set in motion only by the impulse of superior minds. We have suffered severely from the absence of these qualities in our governors:

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with the most extensive commerce, a powerful revenue, and a brave and active people; these resources in the hands of weak and ignorant ministers, have only tended to accelerate our ruin.

Were the statesman that I could point out, to come into power at the present crisis, I am persuaded, that by some bold and masterly manœuvres, he would bring the enemy to reason, and secure us a lasting and honourable peace. Exasperated as they are, his candour and magnanimity must attract the admiration of our enemies. After a life of the most eminent public services, it still remains to him to complete the comprehensive scheme of his benevolence, to restore the blessings of peace, and fix our liberties on the surest foundation. You mistake not, I believe, the illustrious statesman I allude to: you anticipate me by your own reflections on the present occasion: his services and abilities are indeed too transcendent to be so soon forgotten by the people of this country; the theatre on which he appeared has been too conspicuous, the scene too grand and impressive, the sphere of action too comprehensive and interesting, to be soon erased from the memory of mankind.

Place before your eyes a statesman, endowed with the most powerful intellects, the most accomplished

accomplished eloquence, and the most amiable
 qualities in private life: behold him amidst the
 fury of contending factions, the delusion and
 madness of the times, serene, undisturbed, and
 untainted with the vulgar passions of the day.
 Placed in a scene of the most unexampled per-
 plexity, harrassed by a complication of the most
 irritating circumstances, he retained his judg-
 ment and moderation; he lost not his temper
 or dignity. During the most tumultuous agi-
 tation of human affairs, the confusion of wars,
 commotions, and insurrections, the most vio-
 lent convulsions of states and kingdoms, he
 viewed, with a steady eye, the workings of
 this mighty chaos; comprehending and foresee-
 ing, not generally and indistinctly, but minute-
 ly and singly, the rise, the progress, and the
 termination of these gigantic operations: he
 predicted, he deprecated, he warned, he advi-
 sed, he conjured our rulers to abandon their
 desperate schemes; he pointed out the ruinous
 tendency of their precipitate policy; he labour-
 ed incessantly to avert the calamitous disasters,
 which have since overwhelmed Europe; he de-
 plored the cause of suffering humanity; he
 drew into his service all the generous motives
 that can influence the mind of man. Though
 unsuccessful in his unremitting exertions, though
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defeated by the baleful influence of corruption, the approbation of the impartial and enlightened, has raised him to an elevation, which sinks into insignificance the pigmy pilots of our state.

I confess, that when I review the conduct of Mr. Fox, and of the illustrious band that has invariably acted with him, from the commencement of this unhappy warfare, the fame of the most renowned statesmen and senators fade into nothing before my eyes. If, as has been well said, the fortitude of the virtuous man, struggling with adversity be a spectacle worthy of the Divinity, what shall we say of those heroes, who encounter difficulties, who hazard dangers, ignominy, and mortification; not to gratify their own ambition, but to support the cause of their suffering country, of injured humanity, and unprotected misery: viewing matters in this light, no honours, no emoluments that their country can bestow, can be an adequate recompence for such rare and extraordinary exertions: they were the growth of virtuous principle, the native energies of the heart, not inspired or invigorated by any ingredients of ignoble passion; these were the generous qualities of the soul, which the real philanthropist will contemplate and dwell upon with pleasure. No petty views of interest, no rash schemes

schemes of ambition, no desires of revenge, actuated them in the discharge of their duty. They fought the happiness of the people, the preservation and improvement of our constitution, on its proper basis, and with the due distribution of its powers. They supported the monarchy, the strength of which, the ministers of that monarchy pointed against them: they supported the aristocracy, with all its influence preponderating to depress them; they supported the democracy, against the prejudices of a deluded people: such treatment would, in other men, have turned their minds into the most determined hostility against the different parties of this combination; and indeed reasoning on the natural effects of moral causes, we might allow some grounds for such an insinuation; but in contemplating such exalted purity, as we have witnessed during these critical transactions, we must discard our ordinary knowledge of human nature, and apply the result of our observations on mankind, to other personages in a very different situation.

What should farther increase our admiration of these illustrious characters is, that, though they have distinguished themselves by the most glorious exertions for the good of their country, by the most conspicuous abilities, and by the most consummate knowledge of our true interests and

concerns, they never press themselves on our notice, nor mention with triumph their superior claims to honours and preferments. But shall we, my countrymen, be indifferent and inactive on this account? Shall we bestow rank and pre-eminence only on arrogance, presumption, ignorance, and incapacity? Shall that modesty which is the never-failing attendant of extraordinary merit, be the only bar to our attachment and support? Shall we not rouse every generous feeling of our hearts in favour of our best friends and protectors, and manfully express our indignation against the weak and insolent authors of our misfortunes, who add the poignancy of insult and contempt to the cruelty of injustice and oppression? In my opinion, such of our countrymen as come forward at present to address his Majesty for the total exclusion of the ministerial league from his councils for ever, should, at the same time, point out to their sovereign for his counsellors the persons who have shewn themselves worthy of his confidence, and that of the nation, by their services, their abilities, and their honour; and above all, by their attachment to that free constitution, of which his Majesty forms an essential part. This would be speaking and acting like men; this would shew to his Majesty that we are not influenced by caprice or resentment; this would

would prove, that, by expressing our approbation of the real friends of our constitution, we combined, at the same time, the interest and happiness of our sovereign and his family with our own rights and dearest concerns; and that by continuing to cherish the glorious principles which placed his Majesty's family on the throne, we desired to perpetuate and establish the same sovereignty to himself and his posterity for ever on the same foundation. His Majesty would then consider us serious in our requests; he would not imagine, as I have no doubt, great pains are taken to make him suppose, that we are under the influence of disaffection and a factious spirit; he would judge that we were guided by a prudent policy, and that when we pointed out the grievance, we produced at the same time the remedy for our complaints. He would conclude, that we still retained our accustomed loyalty and attachment to his person, and that the best proof we could give of our zeal, was to lay before him our real sentiments on the distressing situation of public affairs. This remonstrance would be attended with the happiest effects; it would, in all probability, induce his Majesty to accede to our demands; his compliance would restore the confidence, and revive the courage of all descriptions of people; it would infuse new vigour and life
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into the state. It would confound the malice and the devices of the determined partizans of democracy, who now exult in secret in the gloomy prospect of affairs, and anticipate with rapture the moment when they may start into action. Such an opportunity would be seized by an amiable and benevolent prince, to heal all disorders, and reconcile all interests by a well-timed and lenient concession.

We should then have at the head of affairs, and for our patrons and advocates, the real friends both of King and people: the most accomplished statesmen, and the most illustrious ornaments of our country. We should know to whom we might apply for the redress of our grievances; we should not hesitate where to find the wisdom and the virtues adapted to the present perilous conjuncture. We might discover, without effort, the minds endued with vigour and fortitude to bear a conflict with the pressure of the times. From former observation, and grateful recollection, if we turned our attention to our foreign and domestic relations, and to the remedy of internal grievances, we might point out the persons best qualified for this important business. It is to be hoped, they will soon complete, with the concurrence of the nation, what they endeavoured before to accomplish against such powerful obstacles. The labour

labour of redemption has been well parcelled out and sorted, and the hands well selected and calculated for the glorious task of salvation and amendment. The consideration of every grievance and defect naturally draws us to the recollection of those hands that can apply the most efficacious remedies. Are our foreign transactions and relations involved in difficulty and perplexity, and managed with the most obvious incapacity and ignorance? is the whole system of the state strangely deranged and debilitated? let the commanding mind of Mr. Fox be called in to apply the remedy, and to infuse a portion of his own energy into our operations. Is the system of our finances exposed to inextricable confusion and derangement? is the management of the revenue involved in difficulties and embarrassments? consult Mr. Sheridan; he has already thrown much light on this subject. Let his assistance be now requested to remedy the growing grievance. Is the state of the representation miserably defective? is it not the cause of all our calamities? is not a real and effectual parliamentary reform the wish of every enlightened citizen, and the only antidote against future evils? inquire into the exertions of Mr. Grey for the attainment of this blessing. Had the nation supported his endeavours, and the virtuous society that acted with him, we should
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now be in a situation very different from the present. Let him be empowered, however, to carry into execution his salutary plan before it be rendered impracticable by the desperate villany of the times. Is the press fettered? is that important bulwark of our freedom defaced and demolished by the attacks of arbitrary power? The nation, I hope, will never forget the glorious labours of Mr. Erskine in defence of this invaluable blessing; the constancy and undaunted firmness he displayed on the most trying occasions. None more worthy than he to re-establish what he defended with so much zeal and eloquence. Are the liberties and securities of the people rendered precarious by the two bills that bear the names of our able and virtuous ministers? consider the part the Duke of Bedford took on this occasion; who, despising the vulgar alarms concerning property and hereditary influence, employed his manly eloquence in support of the liberties of his countrymen. Reflect on the unwearied efforts of the Marquis of Lansdown to procure the blessings of peace. Think of the conduct of Lord Moira, Lord Albemarle, Lord Oxford, and the other ornaments of the aristocracy. Review the steady patriotism of the Duke of Norfolk, and the persevering virtue of the whig nobility. Remember the incessant efforts of the glorious minority in
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the cause of freedom, peace, and happiness. These, and others I could name, and whom their country will distinguish, are rich in the stores of virtuous and meritorious services; they bear before them the splendid trophies of former glorious struggles and victories in defence of the rights of their injured fellow-citizens; trophies, with which, I trust, they will, one day, decorate the august fabric of our national felicity, reared and consolidated by their own hands. The most signal advantages would accrue to the country from their elevation to the direction of our national concerns, if distinguished abilities, consummate knowledge, and the recollection of past benefits have any considerable influence on mankind.

What nation would not boast of having at the head of its affairs, the enlarged and liberal mind of Fox; the versatile and refined talents of Sheridan; the mild, but intrepid Grey; and the amiable and eloquent Erskine? Such are the qualities that throw lustre round a state; that communicate their powerful and benign influence to the extended circle of humanity, and silently control the barbarous and savage passions of the heart. These are the virtues that can alone repair the desperate havoc produced in society by the madness and fury of ferocious passions.

If the leaders of France, though disgraced by cruelty and revenge, have, by the force and energy of their characters, by the unity of their designs, and by their steady and uniform attachment to the advancement and glory of their rising republick, been able to confound, to shatter, and subdue the united forces of Europe, and to fix the power of their country on the firmest basis, what glorious effects might not England expect, from an union of the brightest talents, the purest integrity, the mildest humanity, and the most amiable and virtuous qualities of our nature? Then might we enjoy the august spectacle of wisdom employed in repairing the desolation caused by the rage of contending factions, in restoring the blessings of morality, in healing the wounds of bleeding nations, in reviving the social virtues, and re-establishing the peace and happiness of the world. Then would the train of all the elegant arts reappear under the fostering auspices of peace, to proceed in their career of improvement, to be no longer interrupted by the impious din of arms.

Afflicting as the present warfare has been, it is to be hoped it will be the last; that its ruinous effects will open the eyes of princes and of nations to their real interests and happiness, and make the cultivation of the arts of peace the
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object of their care and attention. It is much to the credit of the present rulers of France, that, though their passions have been exasperated to the utmost pitch, during this unhappy contest, they are now before-hand with their enemies, in sentiments of moderation, in magnanimity, sincerity, and an earnest desire of terminating the effusion of blood, though the advantages of power and victory might incline them to assume a tone of superiority to their enemies. This is a symptom of the most favourable nature: and if similar sentiments should be expressed by persons in authority in this country, it would go a great way to allay animosities, and dispose to more reasonable terms of accommodation. Unfortunately, however, such a declaration would come with a very bad grace from our present ministers, who have been out of all moderation, and even decency in their deportment and their expressions towards the French, who, of course, must have strong suspicions of their sincerity in coming to a negotiation. It must be owned, indeed, that many circumstances in the French revolution, and many occurrences of the present war, must have irritated to an excessive degree, the minds of the persons possessing power and influence in the different states engaged in this contest; more especially of those who must, at times, be con-

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scious to themselves of their own incapacity, and their unmerited promotion. But statesmen who take the lead in transactions of such vast importance as occur in these times, should be possessed of more calmness of judgment, and be endowed with a more liberal and comprehensive understanding. That such have not been the distinguishing qualities of the leading statesmen of the times, must always furnish a serious cause of lamentation to every real friend to the happiness of mankind. The dreadful evils, that we have witnessed, might have been averted by the interference and direction of wisdom and moderation. From minds of this stamp, we might have reasonably expected a deliberate and judicious survey of the most extraordinary events, and of the most important revolution, that has ever taken place in the affairs of the world.

In order to form a just idea of this mighty transaction, we must examine, not the former revolutions, that have occurred in particular states and countries, but those general and comprehensive scenes of history, in which the passions and interests of men have been powerfully engaged, and called into action, by the warmest and most energetic motives. In this view, the only great event than can admit of comparison with the revolution in France, is the reformation

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tion in religion, produced in Europe, during the sixteenth century; and yet, this has not, by any writers on the subject, been introduced to furnish illustration on that important change. The minds of men, on the breaking out of the former mighty event, were agitated by speculative notions of religion, as in the present period, they are occupied and animated by sentiments of liberty, and theoretical ideas of government. The former principles must have produced a high degree of enthusiasm, from the nature of their operating influence; the latter are also known to form some of the most powerful and ardent stimulatives of the human mind. In the Reformation, a number of bold and active fanatics, in the excess of their zeal against the old opinions, proceeded to extravagance and absurdity in their tenets and behaviour; and by their want of moderation, produced confusion, persecution, and bloodshed in many countries of Europe. On the other side, an illustrious band of wise and temperate reformers arose to correct the absurdities, and reform the abuses of the old system: they proceeded with caution, with prudence and unanimity; they avoided the desperate extravagancies of the violent party; they preserved all the excellent principles of the ancient establishment; they refined and purified their religious constitution

constitution to a point of the utmost purity and perfection. The most encouraging success has attended their wise and virtuous labours; the venerable fabric of their rearing has survived the shocks and downfalls of states and empires, and constitutes, to the present day, the object of our admiration, and the purest standard of religious opinions; while the sect of enthusiasts has been incapable of forming any reasonable system of belief, has wavered and floated between the most opposite extremes, and at last sunk into the gloomy gulph of scepticism and infidelity.

The application of these principles to the speculations of the present times, is easy and obvious; the inference is incontestible, and in all probability, the same beneficial consequences would attend the prevailing influence of our moderate political reformers. But should a rash and intemperate band of democratic enthusiasts obtain the lead in the changes that must ensue, the most deplorable effects must be naturally expected.—The ruin of liberty, of order, of property, and law; in short, all the calamitous scenes that have been so dreadfully realized in a neighbouring country. To avert these misfortunes should be the object of our most earnest endeavours: no time is to be lost; the conjuncture is critical, the issue uncertain, and

and the present hour pregnant with the most awful events. Let all, therefore, who wish well to their country, and to mankind in general, unite in supporting those virtuous characters among ourselves, who have, on all occasions, unremittingly endeavoured to promote that temperate reform of our constitution, which shall be consistent with its real spirit, and compatible with the due distribution of its powers in their original formation. Without the entire preservation of the ancient frame of the government, we cannot expect any of the beneficial effects, which must attend the improved state of that admirable system, which wisdom and experience have pointed out by awful lessons, as best calculated to improve the virtues, and advance the happiness of nations.

What salutary instructions may we not derive from a serious reflection on the events and circumstances of the French revolution! What sublime scenes has not Providence unfolded to the eyes of an astonished world, for the improvement of their moral, their civil and political institutions! What wholesome conclusions may we not draw from a series of magnificent transactions, crowded for our benefit into the compass of a few years, to impress upon our minds and hearts, the awful admonitions of a wise and over-ruling Providence. We shall

shall behold, in the destruction of an ancient monarchy, the dismal effects of anarchy and confusion; in the ruin of a powerful nobility, the extirpation of the dignified virtues, and graceful polish of humanity, attended with the most ferocious cruelty and bloodshed. We shall behold, in the formation of a tumultuous democracy, the ruinous consequences of rash and violent counsels, while, at the same time, we admire the vigour, the energy, the invincible activity and resolution that result from that popular system of government. We may now contemplate with calmness it's pernicious and it's salutary tendency, after having witnessed it's glorious triumphs over the most overwhelming combination that was ever formed to subdue the liberties of mankind.

A cool and dispassionate survey of these recent occurrences, and an application of the principles that may be deduced from them, will lead us to consider, that the theory of our own constitution is the best calculated to promote every object of good government; that it unites all the excellencies of the different systems, excluding, at the same time, the pernicious effects of each of them singly, and harmonizing the whole into the most perfect and uniform concord and cohesion. I speak only of the theory of our system, and the improvements that

that may be grafted on it, not of its present and practical state; for if it be permitted to continue much longer, without the necessary reformation, I should not hesitate to declare it to be, the very reverse in effect and tendency, of that admirable system, that has been so deservedly commended. *Corruptio optimi fit pessima*, is a maxim that will hold universally, whether applied to systems of government, or of religion; a maxim which we should ever bear in our minds, and more especially in the present instance. Under these impressions, we cannot avoid being convinced, that the virtuous characters who laboured to affect the improvement of our constitution, according to its genuine spirit and form, gave, in this instance, as well as in many others, the most indubitable proofs of their wisdom and patriotism, in the pursuit of an object that must have been attended with the greatest blessings, and must have averted the heaviest calamities; all descriptions of people must, therefore, see the propriety of empowering them to carry into execution their benevolent plans, before it be too late to effect them: they must likewise concur in wishing them to be placed at the head of affairs, to the management of which they have proved themselves perfectly competent, by their wisdom, virtue, and moderation, and by every

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quality that can dignify or adorn the politician, or the man. With a desire to promote this laudable object, and a sincere attachment to your dearest interests, the writer of the present publication has endeavoured to offer the best advice his humble abilities could afford, to revive in your minds the energy of public spirit, and the generous principle of gratitude for eminent and distinguished services; he has laboured to impress you with a veneration for exalted virtue and abilities, and to inspire you with confidence in those illustrious characters, who seem destined by nature for the salvation of the empire. The prevalence of such noble sentiments, he would venture to maintain, had raised Great Britain to the summit of glory and prosperity; and he would assert, without fear of refutation, that the decay of these virtuous principles had tended, beyond any other cause, to accelerate our ruin. The revival, therefore, of public, and an attachment to the genuine principles of liberty, and to the real friends of our free constitution, are the only remedies that can operate, to raise the country to its former rank, and to restore the prosperity and happiness, the dignity and the importance of the British Empire.

THE END.

